

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, From June 6, 1894, to June 7, 1894, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Beinn Bhreagh, C.B. June 6th, 1894. Notes of interest to my little wife.

Perfect army of men at work on improvements here — some of them camping out in a hut — in a location I should not have expected natives to enjoy — viz — just above the graveyard! Grass seed sown around the Hall today. Saw some men apparently sowing seed there a day or two ago — but it turned out to be fertilizer of some sort — in form of powder. Fancy sowing fertilizer by hand.

Fire hose tried — a great success — a 1¼ inch stream of water shot far over the top of the house. Splendid possibilities for fountains here. Disappointed with volume of water running into reservoir. Abundant for all needs of household — and reservoir holds enough to deluge whole house in case of fire — but not enough flow, I fear, to make Electric Lighting a possibility. Must postpone thoughts of this until we see what water we can rely upon during dry summer. All the nearer springs have already failed — and we are now dependent upon water from distant gulch — and flow from this source is “so much reduced that reservoir does not overflow.” House drains let out all that flows in. Mr. Martin has plentiful supply for watering purposes. Spring has commenced in earnest — and everything is pushing its way up above ground as quickly as it can — so as to look nice and fresh and green by the time you get back.

New steamer now making regular trips between Beinn Bhreagh and Baddeck. It has greater speed than the May-Queen — and is much steadier in rough water than I had expected. So 2 narrow I expected it to roll a great deal — but it seems very steady in

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waves that would make Capt. Coulston's boat dance like a cockle shell. I hear that Mr. McNeil, the builder, has engaged Capt. Coulston's boat for the season.

An important lamb has appeared — a male (four-nippled) having both parents and all four grand-parents four-nippled. It never rains but it pours. A perfect deluge of males! Only two female lambs so far. Four more lambs expected — we can afford to have a let up on males — females now preferred. A specimen of home-made Roquefort cheese — very promising. John McKillop leaves for Middle River tomorrow to study cheese-making at the factory there.

Water-still ordered by Mr. McCurdy has not made its appearance yet — but the one ordered by Mr. Ellis is now in full and successful operation. People here are much surprised to see beautiful fresh drinking water — made out of the salt water of the Lake! Inclined to think water-stills will be the solution of the water problem in Baddeck. Rev. Mr. McDougall seems to think so too — for he has ordered one for his own use. Apparatus is exceedingly simple and inexpensive. Can be worked on any kitchen stove. Have ordered two more. One for our own use at the Point — and the other as a present to Mr. McInnis. Drinking distilled water may perhaps prolong his life — and prevent or lessen the accumulation of stony material in the bladder from which he suffers.

Men now at work completing the canal into the new boat harbor. House-boat has been put in order and is now ready for 3 launching. New sail-boat coming from Montreal like the with sails warranted to beat any other boat here “bat's wing sails.”

Two new row-boats also purchased from Embrees. Large rifle (magazine) warranted to kill bears and large game has made Mr. McCurdy long for Cariboo Camp.

He will disappear there when I go to meet Elsie and Daisy — if indeed they leave tomorrow.

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Crib-work for break-water at the point completed in Baddeck. It will be towed over tomorrow if weather is fine and placed in position.

Boat-house. Why not build a boat-house on these red rocks themselves right back against the cliff. Let roof be flat — with railing round it — and have rustic seats upon it and etc., so that we may sit there and enjoy the view. A stair-case inside would permit us to descend safely — the dangerous part of the cliff -down to the steps hewn in the rock. Think this idea worth working up.

Gipsy-wagon. Another idea. What do you say to having a gipsy-wagon made for camping out on land. Something like your large sleigh-box — for body — with canvas or water-proof top like a grocer's wagon. Mr. Ferguson — in town — could get it up for you if you like.

Mrs. Kennan seems to be full of work for you. She was here all yesterday — going home in the evening. Very busy in the afternoon over some sewing. When I asked her 4 what she was sewing — she exclaimed “Butler's aprons!”

You know I suppose that Mr. McCurdy has purchased a lot of land close to Crescent Grove — just adjoining Mr. Matheson's place. He is hard at work upon the plans of a house to be put up there at once. I went over with him to look over the place. Mrs. Kennan and Miss Straws (?) accompanied us. Mr. McCurdy seemed to be very happy over his property — seemed to have grown at least three inches taller — and strutted about just as Dr. Gillett did in Chicago -after the announcement of his acceptance of the Presidency of the A.A.P.T.S.D.!

People are beginning to speculate concerning his reasons for building — and wonder who “she” is!

Club meeting tonight — forty persons present — most quite young men. Good many came from town. I described Edison's Kinetoscope — and also spoke of eclipses of the sun and moon illustrating by means of our large globe for the earth — big lamp for the sun — and

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a boy's ball for the moon. Mr. Kennan gave a Siberian Experience which interested all greatly. Mr. Kennan, Mr. McCurdy and Josie McLean poured forth a perfect volume of anecdotes jokes and etc., which kept us all in a roar. Then we had music interspersed all through. Cornet and piano — Ellis and A.G.B. Bag-pipes by a Mr. McDonnell of Middle River — Garlic song — in volume — by the crowd. Garlic dancing to the bag-pipes and fiddle. Two fiddlers present and etc., etc.

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A stranger, Mr. McDonald, a young man from Middle River came to see me yesterday — about money matters. To my surprise he did not want to borrow — but came to consult me concerning investments. He had quite snug little balances in different Savings Banks — amounting in all to about \$3500. He had never invested in anything — and his money simply brought him in about 3½ per cent.

I was very much pleased with the appearance of the young man — as well as with the object of his visit — and I have written to Charlie to see what investments he would recommend.

I have just finished another Weather-chart showing change of barometer — change of temperature — rainfall — cloud — and direction of wind. Very much pleased with the results. There can be no doubt I think that the graphical representation of changes of weather (instead of absolute conditions) — yields a map of greater value for purposes of prediction than those now issued by the Weather Bureau. I shall certainly write a paper upon the subject.

I am pleased to find that “direction of wind” (though not a twelve-hour change like the other elements of the map) fits in well with other elements noted — and seems to find an explanation — in the geographical distribution of changes of temperature and pressure.

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So much labor connected with preparation of each map that wiggle-woggles have been neglected.

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Having studied winter conditions throughout the month of January — will now take up the June maps as they come in — and compare results.

June 7th, 1894.

Halifax newspapers, under personal items announce the interesting news that George Kennan is my brother-in-law. As of course, everything in print must be true, I am puzzling my brains over the relationship. Is Mrs. Kennan your sister? or mine? Or is Mr. Kennan your brother? That must be it Mrs. Bell. For I can vouch for the fact that he hasn't got a strawberry mark under his left arm "Then it must be he — your long lost brother!" Mrs. Kennan assures me that he has no strawberry mark under his left arm — so the proof is complete. A la Bon and Con Mrs. B.!

Roweike's Press Agency — for once — sends me something new. A poem entitled "A Memory" "inscribed to Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell (Mabel J. Hubbard)" — published in the "Home Journal" N. Y. May 16th, 1894.

My dear little wife I must stop. Steam-boat just going with mail. I love you very much — Come soon — but stay with Grace and your Mamma — till all are convalescent. How is Robert? and how is Grace. I fancy I see you with the dear little baby in your arms — longing for another little one of your own — and haven't the heart to tell you to come home. All I can say is stay as long as you want — Come home as soon as 7 you can.

Mr. McCurdy is growling — "You'll lose the boat, stop right off!"

Your loving husband, Alec.